

CURATES.

Medomsley, Perpetual Curacy, in the Deanery of Chester, not in charge, pays no first fruits nor procuration. — Patron, the College of Lanchester *olim*, now the Bishop of Durham. — Dedication of the Church to St. Mary Magdalen.

Robert Wright, occurs 1501.

John Crosby, 1561.

William Strudish, 3 May, 1564.

Sir George Thompson, 14 Aug. 1566.

John Graunger, 22 July, 1578.

Myles Watmough, 7 Feb. 1582.

George Wrightson, occurs 16..

Andrew Leach, A. M. lic. 19 Dec. 1635.

Christopher Collison, clerk.

Jonathan Jefferson, cl. 26 July, 1736, p. m. Collison.

William Ellison, A. M. 1784, p. m. Jefferson.

The Parochial Register begins in 1607. "A Register Booke," &c. for which the churchwardens Anthony Hunter, George Curry, Thomas Merley, and Robert Richardson disbursed "for the parchment, sixtene grotes; and for the covering and byndyng, two shillings and sixpence. Paid unto the hands of John Hall, of Consett, Gentleman."

1622. John Stephenson, *innosant*, buried the 20 December. William Elrington, Gent. who lived at Espersheales, in y<sup>e</sup> parish of Bywell, died at Ebchester, and was buried at Shotley Bridge, March 5, 1700-1.

CHRISTOPHER HUNTER, M.B.—Christopher Hunter was the only son of Thomas Hunter, of Medomsley, Gent. by his second wife Margaret Readshaw<sup>o</sup>. He was born .. July, 1675, and was sent at an early age to the Free Grammar School of Keyper, in Houghton-le-Spring<sup>p</sup>. At the age of eighteen he was removed to the University of Cambridge, and was admitted Pensioner of St. John's College in 1692, under the tuition of Mr. Thomas Brown<sup>q</sup>, and of the eminent scholar and antiquary Thomas Baker<sup>r</sup>, whose sister Margaret was the wife of John Hunter, Christopher's elder brother. Distinguished by regularity of conduct and a severe attention to his academical studies, young Hunter soon became a favourite pupil of Mr. Baker; and it may seem probable that from this connection with the venerable antiquary of St. John's, he either imbibed or confirmed that genuine taste for antiquarian pursuits, which, if it did not open the path to worldly profit or distinction, afforded at least a rational and innocent source of amusement during the literary leisure of a long and tranquil life. Mr. Hunter took his degree of B. M. in 1698. He soon after retired to his native country, and fixed himself in medical practice<sup>s</sup> at Stockton on Tees. In 1702 he was married at Durham Abbey, to Elizabeth, one of the two daughters and coheirs of John Elrington, Esq. of Espersheales. With this lady Dr. Hunter received a considerable landed estate, and he had also a very handsome provision settled on him by his father. To these resources were added the emoluments of a respectable practice; yet, with the very common fate of literary men, Dr. Hunter seemed destined never to be rich. Like poor Anthony à Wood, "heraldry, [music, and painting] did so much crowd upon him, that he could not avoid them; and could never give a reason why he should delight in those studies more than in others, so prevalent was nature, mixed with a generosity of mind and a hatred to all that was servile, sneaking, or advantageous for lucre sake<sup>t</sup>." A few years after his marriage, Dr. Hunter removed from Stockton to Durham, a place much more congenial probably to his habits, both as to society and as to the facilities which he found in indulging his antiquarian taste. Here he revelled in abbey-legers, registers, and chartularies. The library of the Dean and Chapter, stored with sound history and topography, and with expensive books of reference, stood open to him<sup>u</sup>. He corresponded with Gordon, Lister, and Horsley<sup>x</sup>; and he discovered

<sup>o</sup> Christopher Hunter was left an orphan at an early age, for his mother was buried in Eshe Chapel; 1 March, 1675-6, and his father died in 1685. See the Pedigree.

<sup>p</sup> In 1724 Dr. Hunter placed an inscription over the porch-door of Keyper School, commemorating its founders, Heath and Gilpin. See Vol. I. p. 162.

<sup>q</sup> Author of "The Detection of the falsehood of the Nag's-head Consecration."

<sup>r</sup> Of whom see a Memoir under CROOK HALL, Parish of Lanchester.

<sup>s</sup> Dr. Hunter had a licence dated 7 Oct. 1701, from Dr. John Brookbank, Sp. Chancellor of Durham (and Senior Fellow of Trinity Hall), to practice physic throughout the whole Diocese of Durham.

<sup>t</sup> It may be also easily proved that, like Anthony, "he took great delight in reading the *Display of Heraldry*, written by John Guillim, and in other books of that faculty, written by John Bossewell, John Ferne, &c. and endeavoured to draw out and trick armes with his pen" (Life of A. à Wood, p. 77); for I have an illuminated and benoted Guillim (which had belonged to the Durham Antiquary, Mickleton), and since passed through the hands of Dr. Hunter and Thomas Gyll, Esq. receiving large additions from each successive proprietor, so that it now resembles the pied doublet of Sir Davy Lindsay, "proudly shewing—Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing." See Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. IX. p. 691. Thomas Gyll, Esq. as appears by the Pedigree, was nephew to Dr. Hunter, son of his half-sister Alice.

<sup>u</sup> The story of Dr. Hunter's being excluded the Library for throwing an ink bottle over a valuable copy of Magna Charta, is, I sincerely hope, for the honour of all parties concerned, apocryphal.

<sup>x</sup> Part of Dr. Hunter's correspondence with Horsley and with Gordon, will appear under LANCHESTER. Three letters from Dr. Lister to our Antiquary are published in Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, see vol. IX. p. 690-1. Dr. Hunter also rendered considerable assistance to Mr. Wilkins in compiling his *Concilia*; and he contributed many valuable materials to Bourne's "History of Newcastle."

coins and excavated altars<sup>y</sup>; and traced roads and stations at Lanchester and Ebchester. Dr. Hunter had now seriously conceived the idea of compiling a history of the Diocese of Durham; and in 1743 he published proposals for printing by subscription, in two Vols. 4to. "Antiquitates Parochiales Dioces. Dunelm. hucusque ineditæ;" collected from the archives of the church of Durham, the Chancery Rolls there, and the Records in the Consistory Court. With a view probably to the completion of this work, Dr. Hunter was entrusted by Thomas Bowes, of Streatlam, Esq. with the *Bowes Papers* (which are yet unpublished), containing the correspondence of Sir Robert Bowes, Elizabeth's Ambassador in Scotland, and his brother Sir George Bowes, Knight Marshall. Dr. Hunter's intended work however never saw the light. His actual publications were confined to a republication of "Davies's Rites and Monuments of the Church of Durham, 1733;"<sup>z</sup> and "An Illustration of Mr. Daniel Neale's History of the Puritans in the article of Peter Smart<sup>a</sup>, A. M. from Original Papers, with Remarks, 1736."<sup>b</sup> His MS collections for his intended Topographical Work were extremely numerous. Two volumes of transcripts from the Chartularies of the Church of Durham, written in an extremely neat hand, and several loose papers, are in the Cathedral Library. Another volume is in the possession of John Hunter, Esq. of the Hermitage; but it is feared that many more are irretrievably lost.

In the spring of 1757 Dr. Hunter retired from Durham to his wife's estate at Unthank, in the Parish of Shotley, where he died in the night between the 12th and 13th of July following, and was buried in Shotley Church.

Here lye the remains of

CHRISTOPHER HUNTER, M. D.

a learned and judicious Antiquary and Physician.

He was the only child of Thomas Hunter, of Medomsley, Gent. by Margaret his second wife.

He married Elizabeth, one of the daughters and co-heiresses of John Elrington, of Aspersields, esq.

by whom he had two sons and a daughter.

He died 13th of July, An. Dom. 1757,  
in the 83d year of his age.

Dr. Hunter's wife, to whom he had been married fifty-four years, survived him, as did his eldest son Thomas. John his younger son, and Anne, an only daughter, died long before him.

In his person Dr. Hunter was slender and well formed, somewhat above the middle size; extremely neat and plain in his dress, and of mild and conciliating manners. His life was a pattern of simple and inflexible integrity; and his remarkable moderation in respect of his professional fees, and his extreme disinterestedness in all matters of worldly œconomy, kept and left him poor. In his diet Dr. Hunter observed the strictest temperance. After his first settling in the country he had occasionally indulged in conviviality; a severe fall from his horse after an excess of this sort produced an entire reform: he determined on his recovery never to taste any thing stronger than water, and to the end of his life he persevered most religiously in this resolution. Therefore "his age was as a lusty winter—frosty but kindly." To supply the want of fermented liquors he had recourse to the somewhat immoderate use of coffee, drinking frequently twenty-four cups in a day. To this practice were probably owing the slight epileptic fits to which he was subject, which left him in a few minutes as well as before. With this exception Dr. Hunter preserved his health and faculties unimpaired to extreme age<sup>c</sup>, and seems to have completed the full stadium which nature had appointed for him.

Dr. Hunter's library was purchased by Richardson, bookseller in Durham, for about 360*l.* and dispersed by sale. His collection of Roman Antiquities and Coins<sup>d</sup>, and part of his MSS. were bought by the Dean and Chapter of Durham for 40*l.* and are now in the Cathedral Library.

<sup>y</sup> To the success of his researches on Roman ground the altars preserved in the Cathedral Library of Durham bear ample testimony, and his valuable local knowledge was of the highest use to Horsley in compiling his "Britannia Romana;" and to Gordon in his "Iter Septentrionale." See HORSLEY, p. 250-291, and Iter Sept. Addenda, p. 13.

<sup>z</sup> This is anonymous. I have Dr. Hunter's own copy, with several additions, and most of the epitaphs in the Cathedral and Cathedral-yard transcribed on the blank leaves.

<sup>a</sup> A turbulant Prebendary, "prosecuted for preaching a vile sermon in the Cathedral, July 27, 1628;" and who afterwards in his turn prosecuted Dr. Cosin for Popish Innovations. See vol. I. p. cvii.

<sup>b</sup> Both these were printed at Durham by Isaac Ross.

<sup>c</sup> Within a few years of his death he experienced no extraordinary fatigue from a walk of eight or ten miles.

<sup>d</sup> The latter are of no other value than as being found at Lanchester and Ebchester.

\*.\* For most of the materials from which this memoir is collected the Author is indebted to papers communicated by John Hunter, of the Hermitage, Esq. (who now represents the elder branch of Dr. Hunter's family), and to a short printed account in Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. VIII. p. 282-5.

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